

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for making a payment to a payee on behalf of a payor, comprising:  
2 receiving a payment request to pay a payee on behalf of a payor;  
3 selecting, based upon the received payment request, one processing  
4 parameter from a group of processing parameters consisting of at least two of a  
5 speed of processing parameter, a cost of processing parameter, and a risk of  
6 processing parameter associated with completing the payment; and  
7 effecting payment in accordance with the one selected processing parameter.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the one processing parameter is selected  
2 based upon at least one of i) the identity of the payor, ii) the identity of the payee, iii)  
3 an amount of the payment, iv) the identity of a consumer service provider with which  
4 the payor is associated, and v) information associated with one or more prior  
5 payments to the payee paid on behalf of the payor.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein each processing parameter is associated with  
2 a priority, and further comprising:  
3 identifying the one of the processing parameters of the group of processing  
4 parameters having a highest priority;  
5 wherein the one selected parameter is the one identified parameter having the  
6 highest priority.

1     4.     The method of claim 3, wherein:  
2             the payment request is received by a payment service provider; and  
3             an associated priority of a processing parameter of the group of processing  
4     parameters is determined by at least one of i) the payor, ii) a consumer service  
5     provider, and ii) the payment service provider.

1     5.     The method of claim 4, wherein:  
2             the group of processing parameters consists of the speed of processing  
3     parameter, the cost of processing parameter, and the risk of processing parameter;  
4             if the payor determines an associated priority of a processing parameter, the  
5     payor determines a priority of the speed of processing parameter and the cost of  
6     processing parameter, but not the risk of processing parameter;  
7             if a consumer service provider determines an associated priority of a  
8     processing parameter, the consumer service provider determines a priority of each  
9     of the speed of processing parameter, cost of processing parameter, and risk of  
10    processing parameter; and  
11            if the payment service provider determines an associated priority of a  
12    processing parameter, the payment service provider determines a priority of each of  
13    the speed of processing parameter, cost of processing parameter, and risk of  
14    processing parameter.

1     6.     The method of claim 3, wherein the payment request is received by a  
2     payment service provider, and further comprising:

3           determining if a consumer service provider associated with the payor has  
4           determined a priority of each processing parameter of the group of processing  
5           parameters;

6           wherein, if it is determined that the consumer service provider has determined  
7           a priority of each processing parameter, the one identified processing parameter is  
8           the processing parameter having the highest priority as determined by the consumer  
9           service provider; and

10          wherein, if it is determined that a consumer service provider has not  
11          determined a priority of each processing parameter, the one identified processing  
12          parameter is the processing parameter having the highest priority as determined by  
13          the payment service provider.

1       7.     The method of claim 6, wherein the group of processing parameters consists  
2       of the speed of processing parameter, the cost of processing parameter, and the risk  
3       of processing parameter, and further comprising:

4           determining if the payor has determined a priority of the speed of processing  
5           parameter and the cost of processing parameter;

6           wherein, if it is determined that a consumer service provider has determined a  
7           priority of each processing parameter and that the payor has determined a priority of  
8           the speed of processing parameter and the cost of processing parameter, the one  
9           identified processing parameter is the processing parameter having the highest  
10          priority as determined by at least one of the consumer service provider and the  
11          payor; and

12            wherein, if it is determined that the consumer service provider has not  
13            determined a priority of each processing parameter and that the payor has  
14            established a priority of the speed of processing parameter and the cost of  
15            processing parameter, the one identified processing parameter is the processing  
16            parameter having the highest priority as determined by at least one of the payment  
17            service provider and the payor.

1        8.        The method of claim 1, wherein each processing parameter of the group of  
2            processing parameters is associated with a priority, and further comprising:

3            identifying the one of the group of processing parameters having a highest  
4            priority;

5            determining those of a plurality of debit/credit combinations available to effect  
6            payment in accordance with the one identified processing parameter;

7            wherein, if only a single one of the plurality of debit/credit combinations is  
8            determined to be available, the one identified processing parameter is the selected  
9            processing parameter and the payment is effected by the one debit/credit  
10           combination.

1        9.        The method of claim 8, wherein each of the plurality of debit/credit  
2            combinations is associated with a rank for each processing parameter of the group  
3            of processing parameters, and further comprising:

4            if more than one of the plurality of debit/credit combinations is determined to  
5            be available, identifying the one of the more than one available debit/credit

6 combinations having a highest rank associated with the one identified processing  
7 parameter;

8 wherein the one identified processing parameter is the selected processing  
9 parameter and the payment is effected by the one identified debit/credit combination.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein, if none of the more than one available  
2 debit/credit combinations is identified as having a highest rank associated with the  
3 one identified processing parameter having the highest priority, the selected  
4 processing parameter is a processing parameter other than the one identified  
5 processing parameter having the highest priority.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 selecting a form of payment based upon the selected processing parameter;  
3 wherein the payment is effected in the selected form.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the selected form of payment is one of i) a  
2 draft drawn on a deposit account associated with the payor, ii) a check drawn on a  
3 deposit account other than the payor deposit account, and iii) an electronic funds  
4 transfer drawn on a deposit account other than the payor deposit account.

1 13. A system for making a payment to a payee on behalf of a payor, comprising:  
2 a communications interface configured to receive a payment request to pay a  
3 payee on behalf of a payor; and

4 a processor configured to i) select, based upon the received payment request,  
5 one processing parameter from a group of processing parameters consisting of at  
6 least two of a speed of processing parameter, a cost of processing parameter, and a  
7 risk of processing parameter associated with making the payment, and ii) to cause  
8 payment to be effected in accordance with the one selected processing parameter.

1 14. The system of claim 13, wherein the one processing parameter is selected  
2 based upon at least one of i) the identity of the payor, ii) the identity of the payee, iii)  
3 an amount of the payment, iv) the identity of a consumer service provider with which  
4 the payor is associated, and v) information associated with one or more prior  
5 payments to the payee paid on behalf of the payor.

1 15. The system of claim 13, wherein:  
2 each processing parameter is associated with a priority;  
3 the processor is further configured to i) identify the one of the processing  
4 parameters of the group of processing parameters having a highest priority, and ii)  
5 select the one identified parameter having the highest priority.

1 16. The system of claim 15, wherein:  
2 the payment request is received by a payment service provider; and  
3 an associated priority of a processing parameter of the group of processing  
4 parameters is determined by at least one of i) the payor, ii) a consumer service  
5 provider, and ii) the payment service provider.

1 17. The system of claim 16, wherein:

2 the group of processing parameters consists of the speed of processing  
3 parameters, the cost of processing parameter, and the risk of processing parameter;

4 if the payor determines an associated priority of a processing parameter, the  
5 payor determines a priority of the speed of processing parameter and the cost of  
6 processing parameter, but not the risk of processing parameter;

7 if a consumer service provider determines an associated priority of a  
8 processing parameter, the consumer service provider determines a priority of each  
9 of the speed of processing parameter, cost of processing parameter, and risk of  
10 processing parameter; and

11 if the payment service provider determines an associated priority of a  
12 processing parameter, the payment service provider determines a priority of each of  
13 the speed of processing parameter, cost of processing parameter, and risk of  
14 processing parameter.

1 18. The system of claim 15, wherein:

2 the payment request is received by a payment service provider;

3 the processor is further configured to determine if a consumer service  
4 provider associated with the payor has determined a priority of each processing  
5 parameter of the group of processing parameters;

6 if it is determined that a consumer service provider has determined a priority  
7 of each processing parameter, the one identified processing parameter is the  
8 processing parameter having the highest priority as determined by the consumer  
9 service provider; and

if it is determined that a consumer service provider has not determined a priority of each processing parameter, the one identified processing parameter is the processing parameter having the highest priority as determined by the payment service provider.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein:

the group of processing parameters consists of the speed of processing parameter, the cost of processing parameter, and the risk of processing parameter;

the processor is further configured to determine if the payor has determined a priority of the speed of processing parameter and the cost of processing parameter;

if it is determined that a consumer service provider has determined a priority of each processing parameter and that the payor has determined a priority of the speed of processing parameter and the cost of processing parameter, the one identified processing parameter is the processing parameter having the highest priority as determined by at least one of the consumer service provider and the payor; and

if it is determined that the consumer service provider has not determined a priority of each processing parameter and that the payor has established a priority of the speed of processing parameter and the cost of processing parameter, the one identified processing parameter is the processing parameter having the highest priority as determined by at least one of the payment service provider and the payor.



1 20. The system of claim 13, wherein:

2 each processing parameter of the group of processing parameters is  
3 associated with a priority;

4 the processor is further configured to i) identify the one of the group of  
5 processing parameters having a highest priority, and ii) determine those of a plurality  
6 of debit/credit combinations available to effect payment in accordance with the one  
7 identified processing parameter; and

8 if only a single one of the plurality of debit/credit combinations is determined  
9 to be available, the one identified parameter is the selected processing parameter  
10 and the payment is effected by the one debit/credit combination.

1 21. The system of claim 20, wherein:

2 each of the plurality of debit/credit combinations is associated with a rank for  
3 each processing parameter of the group of processing parameters;

4 the processor is further configured to, if more than one of the plurality of  
5 debit/credit combinations is determined to be available, identify the one of the more  
6 than one available debit/credit combinations having a highest rank associated with  
7 the one identified processing parameter; and

8 the one identified processing parameter is the selected processing parameter  
9 and the payment is effected by the one identified debit/credit combination.

1 22. The system of claim 21, wherein, if none of the more than one available  
2 debit/credit combinations is identified as having a highest rank associated with the  
3 one identified processing parameter having the highest priority, the selected

- 4 processing parameter is a processing parameter other than the one identified
- 5 processing parameter having the highest priority.

1 23. The system of claim 13, wherein:

2 the processor is further configured to i) select a form of payment based upon  
3 the selected processing parameter, and ii) cause the payment to be effected in the  
4 selected form; and

5 the selected form of payment is one of i) a draft drawn on a deposit account  
6 associated with the payor, ii) a check drawn on a deposit account other than the  
7 payor deposit account, and iii) an electronic funds transfer drawn on a deposit  
8 account other than the payor deposit account.